



October 25, 2023

Re: Equality Michigan Support of H.B. 5207, 5208, 5209, 5210, 5211, 5212, 5213, 5214, & 5215

Dear Chair Breen and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit, in writing, our support of H.B. 5207-5215. We are strongly in favor of this legislation, and it is our sincere hope that the committee will take action to advance these bills.

Equality Michigan is Michigan's statewide lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) advocacy organization. Our mission is for LGBTQ+ people to live their best lives right here in the state of Michigan, by engaging, educating, and empowering our community members to strive for equality and an end to discrimination. Equality Michigan deems H.B. 5207-5215 to be a significant step toward full equality for LGBTQ+ families, and additionally, for all Michiganders, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

Often, the negative impact of policies that limit individual liberties for one community extends beyond that, subjecting other groups of people to marginalization and injustice. That is absolutely the case with Michigan's outdated Surrogate Parenting Act of 1988, which makes Michigan the only state in our country that still broadly criminalizes surrogacy, creating inequality for LGBTQ+ Michiganders and many others.

H.B. 5207-5215 will both repeal the inequitable Surrogate Parenting Act of 1988, and bring much needed progress to Michigan's laws, which in their current state, leave too many families exposed to potentially harmful situations and without explicit legal protections. Parents, regardless of marital status, who use, need, and rely on assisted reproduction and surrogacy to grow their families here in our state, deserve a clear and equitable pathway to assured, legal parenthood. Children born through the means of assisted reproduction deserve, as a fundamental right, the legal security and stability of any other child in our state. And people who serve as surrogates deserve the legal clarity and validity to enter into contracts that protect their own well-being, autonomy, and personhood. These bills address all these critical issues.

The enactment of H.B. 5207-5215 will continue to show Michiganders and the rest of the country that this is a state where the values of equality and fairness are paramount, and where they and their families can live, grow, and thrive. Thank you once again for the opportunity to submit this written testimony, and we ask for your prompt passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emme'.

Emme Zanotti
Director of Advocacy & Civic Engagement
Equality Michigan